

The Benefits of Leisure at The Austin Parks and Recreation Department

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History, Arts and Nature Social Benefits

- Provides individuals, families and neighborhoods with meaningful engagement activities, events and experiences, fostering pride in both creative expression and social identity.
- Provides individuals with the opportunities and support to experience history and tradition through art and performance.
- Provides opportunities to create, express and socially communicate the meaning of existence, which enhances personal sense of freedom and value.
- Enhances and encourages self development.
- Enhances community awareness and appreciation.
- Provides opportunities for participation, celebration, education, healing, and ceremony.

Austin's History, Arts and Nature Division of the Parks and Recreation Department served a record number of Austin citizens, children, family and friends, nearly 700,000 in 2010, who participated in over 2000 diverse artistic, cultural, historical and environmental events, classes, productions, festivals, exhibits and activities.

The division is comprised of eleven (11) facilities (The Elizabet Ney Museum, the O.Henry Museum, the Suzanna Dickinson Museum, the George Washington Carver Museum, the Austin Nature and Science Center, the Emma Barrientos Mexican Culture Center, Zilker Hillside Theatre, The Dougherty Arts Center and the Zilker Botanical Gardens, Sheffield Education Center, Renaissance Market.) The Division provides free or low cost access to arts, history or environmental experiences enhancing Austin's identity as a culture of creativity and innovation. Austin is the leading US City in terms of satisfaction with quality of life according to the ETC Institute 2010 survey.

Golf Social Benefits

Perhaps one of the leading misperceptions of golf is that the sport is too difficult to learn and mainly for the elite. The game of golf can be played by anyone. It is the leading sport among active seniors. Juniors play in the City of Austin golf tournaments starting at age 5. Women and minorities make up the fastest growing population of golfer. Golf is the game that challenges critical thinking while providing exercise for all age groups. Most importantly, it all takes place outdoors in a quiet setting. The golf course is often considered the trade floor for business.

The game of golf requires limited physical strength and although golf is a challenging game, it is a game that can be played at any age and is considered a leisure sport among mature adults. While other sports often require finding a partner or team of like abilities, golf can be played by the individual. A group of four players could have a wide range of abilities from a beginning golfer to the expert. Players can utilize golf handicaps and varying tee boxes to provide

Senior Services Social Benefits

- Provides individuals, families and neighborhoods with meaningful engagement activities, events and experiences, fostering pride in both creative expression and social identity.
- Provides individuals with the opportunities and support to experience history and tradition through art and performance.
- Provides opportunities to create, express and socially communicate the meaning of existence, which enhances personal sense of freedom and value.
- Enhances and encourages self development.
- Enhances community awareness and appreciation.
- Provides opportunities for participation, celebration, education, healing, and ceremony.

The Senior Programs Area is dedicated to helping seniors live meaningful lives of dignity, enjoyment and useful purpose by providing active fitness, educational, recreational and social activities and classes for adults and seniors age 50 years and older. In addition to travel, classes, clubs and leagues, various services and volunteer opportunities are also available at three Senior Activity Centers. Seniors may request door to door transportation to attend programs at a Senior Center, to appointments or to any of our six Senior Lunch Program sites throughout the city. The Senior Programs Area also operates the Old Bakery and Emporium which sells homemade arts and crafts and displays a community gallery spotlighting artisans age 50 and older. Senior Services has served as a catalyst to partner with our community to strive for continuous growth in serving our diverse and changing community.





By partnering with Meals on Wheels and More for the 2010-2011 budget year, Senior Services was able to served over 63,000 nutritionally balanced meals to senior adults participating in recreational activities at two (2) senior activity centers, four (5) recreation and community centers. Beside the nutritional benefits of the congregate meal program, seniors are socializing, meeting new friends, and learn new things.

Aquatics Social Benefits

Safe for all ages to participate and promotes lifelong skills.

- Allows you to meet, communicate and have fun with others while participating in physical activity.
- Improves mood, decreases anxiety and depression.
- Improves family connections through activity.
- Provides education on the dangers of the water and the proper procedures to keep oneself/others safe around the water and decreases water tragedies from occurring.
- Promotes respect for the water and provides opportunities to gain the skills necessary to make oneself safe around the water.
- Supports self-esteem through skill acquisition and accomplishment.
- Provides a sense of belonging to a group through participation and team spirit.
- Many locations throughout the City of Austin are available for easy accessibility

The Aquatic Division is comprised of fifty (50) facilities including municipal, neighborhood, wading pools and splash pads. The Division provides free or low cost access to these facilities for recreational swimming as well as offering progressive lessons and programming for customers 6 months and older.

We also have Social Benefits available at our Recreation Centers, within our Aquatics, Athletics, Inclusion and Centralized Programming Divisions.